

Section 5: Ethics and Security

Code of Ethics and Security Regulations

The following code of ethics conforms to the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing developed by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education:

“It is a breach of professional ethics for school personnel to provide verbal or non verbal clues or answers, teach items on the test, share writing prompts, coach, and hint or in any way influence a student’s performance during the testing situation. A breach of ethics may result in invalidation of test [Bridge Plan for Academic Validation] results and LEA or MSDE disciplinary action.”

Unlike the HSA test and its administration, the Bridge Plan does require active participation by school-based personnel to assure successful administration of the Plan itself. A school-based person must be assigned to a participating student while he/she works through the project. The assigned person should make sure the student understands the dimensions of the project, where and how to secure any necessary materials and suggest possible resources. The assigned person is the de facto advisor for the project meeting with the student on the agreed upon review dates. This person may provide direct instruction without providing the exact answer. In the case of a student with an IEP, 504 Plan, or ELL Plan, the assigned person must ensure that all accommodations are met during the completion of the project.

It is imperative that within these guidelines that ethics and security measures are maintained to assure the validity of the Bridge Plan. The student must sign the Student Planner and Agreement Form and the Project Package Submission Form, attesting that the project submitted is that of the student. The designated school representatives must also attest that the submitted project is that of the student.

Secure Materials

All materials used in the evaluation of a student’s Bridge project will be considered secure, including the scoring documents and student booklets.

Scoring Guide

Scoring Guides are to be held by the Local Accountability Coordinator or Bridge Plan Coordinator and distributed to the school for use by the Local Review Panels. Scoring documents are available on-line through secure access codes provided by MSDE to the Local Accountability Coordinators or Bridge Plan Coordinators. These materials may be used either electronically or in hard copy format. They may only be used during scoring or professional development activities with Project Monitors, and they must be secured accordingly.

Student’s Bridge Plan Packet

The student’s Bridge Plan packet, which contains his/her personal information, signed forms, and the Review Panel Recommendation to the Superintendent, are considered secure. Once the student has decided to engage in the Bridge Plan, the designated school official will be

responsible for completing the required packet information, which must be secured until given to the Review Panel. After the Review Panel completes the evaluation of the project, the following materials will become part of the student's permanent folder: (1) planner agreement and (2) project acceptance letter.

The student packet for the Bridge Plan containing confidential information may be accessed by the Local Accountability Coordinator or Bridge Plan Coordinator for reference purposes, by school administration, or by designated school personnel working with the student's guidance counselor.

Non-Secure Materials

Project Modules and Project Monitor Manuals for each content area are considered non-secure and will be sent to Local Accountability Coordinators or Bridge Plan Coordinators on-line. The Local Accountability Coordinator or Bridge Plan Coordinator will be responsible for providing these content modules and Project Monitor Manuals to each school's designated person. The Local Accountability Coordinator or Bridge Plan Coordinator may provide the information to each school electronically or in hard copy, but must ascertain that all information provided by MSDE for each content area is received at the school level. These modules and manuals will be used by a number of different individuals who will be working with the student engaged in the project. Access to these modules and manuals should be provided to school personnel as soon as possible after they are received from MSDE.

For each Bridge Plan assessment time period, MSDE will issue a package of HSA content specific project modules. This package may contain both new and previously used modules. Students beginning the Bridge Plan process during this time period will be assigned project modules from this package.

General Information Regarding Secure and Non-Secure Materials

Superintendents, assistant superintendents, local school system content supervisors, principals, assistant principals, and Project Monitors may have access to the project modules, scoring documents, Project Monitor guide, and student materials at any time. Viewing of the scoring documents must be done in a secure setting, and individuals must sign the Bridge Plan Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Local Accountability Coordinators or Bridge Plan Coordinators should provide immediate access to the project modules to all school personnel responsible for the monitoring of a student's project. Although, Project Modules and Project Monitor Manuals for each content area are considered non-secure, it is expected that these materials will not be used for classroom instruction or for any purpose other than its intended purpose as an alternate path of meeting high school assessment graduation requirements.

Scoring documents should remain secured until they are needed by the Local Review Panel or for training purposes. Scoring documents must be returned to the Local Accountability Coordinator or Bridge Plan Coordinator after use by the panel.

Non-certified staff may have access to secure materials only for clerical purposes. (This is especially important since the evaluation results of the Review Panel must be directed to the appropriate personnel in the guidance department of the student's high school.)

Any breach of security should immediately be reported to the school principal. It is the responsibility of the principal to investigate and address security concerns.

Staff that is not specifically involved in a student's Bridge Plan project, the general public, including but not limited to the members of the Board of Education, are not allowed access to secure Bridge Plan materials. The legal authority for this denial is found in §10-618 (c) of the State Government Article, Annotated Code of Maryland:

“(1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, a custodian may deny inspection of test questions, scoring keys, and other examination information that relates to the administration of licenses, employment, or academic matters.”